

Remarks:

With this preliminary amendment, applicants cancel claim 18. Method claim 17 is amended to include the novel features of claim 1. No new matter has been added. Applicants appreciated the Examiner's indication of allowed claims 9 and 10.

The pending claims are 1-17.

Claims 1-5, 7, 11, 14, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Shannon et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,431,185). Claim 8 stands rejected by the Office Action as unpatentable over Shannon et al. in view of Jepson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,669,681). The Office Action rejects claims 12, 13, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Shannon et al. in view of Schumacher et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,626,172).

I. Lack of Anticipation

Applicants respectfully submit that Shannon et al. does not teach each and every limitation of the invention as claimed in independent claims 1, 7, 11, 14, and 17. Simply stated, the check valves of Shannon et al. are all disposed in a single common passageway. The present claims, however, require that each inlet defines a respective fluid passageway, and each respective passageway has its own check valve:

More specifically, claim 1 recites "a plurality of inlets, each inlet defining an opening to a respective fluid passageway, each said passageway containing a check-valve." Referring to FIG. 3 of Shannon et al., Shannon et al. fails to disclose that each inlet defines a passageway and that each passageway contains a check valve. As shown in FIG. 3 of Shannon et al., upstream end 21 having inlet 35 does not contain a valve seat (compare valve seats 25a, 25b, or 25c over respective inlets 24a, 24b, and 24c). Moreover, each valve seat 25a, 25b, or 25c over respective inlets 24a, 24b, and 24c are not disposed each in a respective passageway. In fact, these valve seats are all disposed within single chamber 22, not each within its own passageway as claimed in claim 1. Because Shannon et al. does not disclose each and every limitation of the invention as claimed in independent claim 1, applicants submit that claim 1 and dependent claims 2-9 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration.

Further, by placing the check valves each in their respective passageway and not in a common passageway as in Shannon et al., the presently claimed invention reduces the common volume where different solutions flow through. By reducing the common volume, the present invention reduces error in the final product bag composition, which error is due to residue buildup of individual solutions within the common volume of the manifold (see page 14, lines 13-18).

buildup of individual solutions within the common volume of the manifold (see page 14, lines 13-18).

Independent claims 7, 11, and 14 also all recite "a plurality of inlets, each inlet defining an opening to a respective fluid passageway, each said passageway containing a check-valve." As set forth in applicants' argument above, Shannon et al. fails to disclose such a limitation. Applicants submit that independent claims 7, 11, and 14, and their dependent claims are also in a condition for allowance.

Claim 17 is amended to include the novel features of claim 1, that is, a manifold having "a plurality of inlets, each inlet defining an opening to a respective fluid passageway, each said passageway containing a check-valve." For the reasons set forth above, applicants submit that the method of claim 17 is in a condition for allowance.

II. Non-obviousness

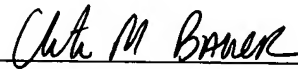
Claim 8 stands rejected by the Office Action as unpatentable over Shannon et al. in view of Jepson et al. Because claim 8 depends from claim 1, is read to include all the limitations of the claim from which it depends, and Jepson et al. does not fill the void left by Shannon et al., applicants submit that claim 8 is also in a condition for allowance.

Claims 12, 13, 15, and 16 stand rejected by the Office Action as unpatentable over Shannon et al. in view of Schumacher et al. Because claims 12, 13, 15, and 16 depend from allowable independent claims, are read to include all the limitations of the claim from which they depend, and Schumacher et al. does not fill the void left by Shannon et al., applicants submit that claims 12, 13, 15, and 16 are also in a condition for allowance.

III. Conclusion

Shannon et al. fails to disclose each and every limitation of the presently claimed invention. Specifically, Shannon et al. fails to disclose a manifold having a plurality of inlets, each inlet defining an opening to a respective fluid passageway, each said passageway containing a check-valve, as claimed in the independent claims. Because Jepson et al. or Schumacher et al. fail to supply the missing limitations of Shannon et al., the pending claims are neither taught nor suggested by the cited references. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration and submit that the pending claims are in a condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan H. Spadt, Reg. No. 45,122
Christian M. Bauer, Reg. No. 51,443
Attorneys for Applicants

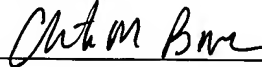
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☒ P.O. Box 980
Valley Forge, PA 19482
(610) 407-0700

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October 14, 2004